

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Adams County Courthouse

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 210 West Broadway Avenue

☐

not for publication

city or town Ritzville

☐

vicinity

state Washington

code WA

county Adams

code 001

zip code 99169

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria

X A    B X C    D

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

WASHINGTON STATE SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register

   determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/ Courthouse

GOVERNMENT/ Government Office

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/ Courthouse

GOVERNMENT/ Government Office

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

Stripped Classical

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Synthetics: Vinyl

other:

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Adams County Courthouse is a three story, 21,298 sf stripped classical courthouse completed construction in 1941. The building is situated to the southwest portion of the downtown area in Ritzville, WA. The courthouse is preceded by a grand courtyard with a circular walkway that leads to the main parking area on East Broadway Avenue. This historic structure is characterized by its bold geometric layout, smooth-brick exterior walls, decorative ornamentation and streamline windows.

The Adams County Courthouse, located in Ritzville, WA, is situated one block to the west of the main downtown core. This stripped classical Courthouse sits at the center of its block facing southwest welcomed by a grand courtyard on the south east portion of the site. Significant additions include the 11,663sf Sheriff's office and jail that join the main courthouse building at its northwest perimeter.

At three stories high, the courthouse is a brick structure with strong, symmetrically geometric qualities in line with other governmental buildings of the 1940's. The smooth, streamlined masonry exterior is broken up by decorative motif roundels on the third floor of the front façade. These motifs are a depict wheat and harvest. Being a farming community, these concrete relief motifs hold significance in depicting the still relevant commodity of agriculture for this region. Similar decorative elements are found throughout the interior of the courthouse.

Construction of the courthouse began in the early part of 1940 and was led by contractor Clyde M Ludberg. When completed in 1941, the prominent, simplified structure was an expression of architectural modernity and a significant icon for the importance of local government for the region. The buildings fenestrations line the front façade in a symmetrical manner and express the buildings streamline appearance, a characteristic of government buildings of the early 1940's. The original, wood cased windows were replaced with metal cased windows during a period of modernization that also updated the entrance doorway and surrounding window treatment. Although replaced, the windows maintain the strong, geometric properties of the courthouse. Original window openings remain, and run across all sides with of the building's geometry with continuous horizontal bands and provide a clear expression for the three levels of the courthouse.

The brick building has parapet walls that hide a low sloped roof. The courthouse faces southeast and is introduced by a grand courtyard. This particular site is significant in that it was the site of the previous courthouse built in first from 1892 and remodeled in 1905. The second courthouse stood where the current courtyard is located.

The main courthouse entrance is characterize by the two fluted columns framing a glass double door entrance. The classical column continues the agricultural theme with motifs of wheat head and leaves. A decorative bas relief motif above the doorway greets visitors with a depiction of men and oxen sowing and harvesting. The window treatment that surround the doorway are also decorated with mullions depicting wheat heads and leaves.

The main entrance to the courthouse is accessed by an exterior stair that rises to a split level lobby. The main circulation for the courthouse is characterized by a centrally located, terrazzo grand staircase. The elegant,

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rounded railings are accented by decorative wood railings. Between the wood spokes are detailed castings of wheat stalks. At the base of the staircase leading to the third floor courtrooms are a pair of wood accented light alcoves with a decorative light fixture resting atop a newel post. Similar attention is given to the wood work detailing throughout the courthouse's main corridors and offices. A second entrance is located between the Sheriff's office and the courthouse. Two glass doors are located within a curtain wall are accented by a large archway uniting the two structures. This entrance was a part of a two story addition that united the two facilities. The addition was part based on the original designs by Whitehouse & Price and wasn't added until 1984 at cost of approximately one million dollars.

A double-loaded corridor branches from the centralized circulation at the first and second floors of the building. At the third level, the stairs lead to a lobby. From the lobby, an original solid wood double door leads to the Superior Courtroom. To the right of these doors is a single door, also original and solid wood, which leads to the District Courtroom.

The Superior Courtroom is ornamented with its original wood wainscot along all four of its walls. The judges bench rests at the most elevated level, centered at the front of the room, a flag to each side sits with the judge. The witness stand is next to the judge and rests on a lower tier. A Clerk's desk is directly in front of the witness stand and also rest on the lower tier, which is slightly above the main floor. The juror's box is located on the right wall of the courtroom and is separated to the rest of the courtroom by a wood panel wall. In a similar fashion of the wainscot and judges bench, the prosecutors and defense desk, and pew seating are all of similar, solid wood finish. Both agriculture and patriotic inspired decoration can be found in the subtle details of the courtroom. A blue ribbon accented by yellow stars rests at the top of the walls, resembling colors and stars of the American flag. Small, significant details like this were often used in the courtroom to signify the importance of pride in country, a sense for democratic values and as a place that would provide constitutional rights to defendants. The plaster crown molding placed directly above the blue ribbon continues the agricultural theme found throughout the courthouse. The detailing is an abstracted representation used to resemble influence from wheat and agriculture of the region. The central portions of the ceiling have been raised and finished with an acoustical treatment that has been painted with a repeating wheat pattern. Finally, the carpet of the courthouse has been replaced with a blue and yellow star pattern carpet following a historical recommendations report in order to preserve the integrity for historical accuracy of the courtroom.

The District Courtroom has similar traits to the Superior Courtroom. The walls have similar wood wainscot at all the walls of the superior courtroom. To the front left of the courtroom is the Judge's bench, elevated above the floor. At either side of the bench is the Clerk's desk and witness stand, at a slightly lower tier. The Judge's bench, Clerk's desk, witness stand and pews are all solid wood. The carpet, crown molding, and blue ribbon are also part of the decorative elements of this courtroom.

Throughout the courthouse there are other examples of existing furnishings. Two of the offices, the Auditors office and Treasurers office both have original reception counters. Then, in the Auditors and Commissioners Offices original vaults have been home to county records that date back to the original formation of Adams County.

The Sheriff's Office is located to the northwest of the courthouse. In 1984 the office received an interior remodel that included a two-story addition, joining the Courthouse and Sheriff's Office. Responsible for the design was Architects Tan-Brookie-Kundig. It was also during this remodel that the windows of the courthouse were replaced with metal framed casement windows. The sheriff's office includes a jail, characterized by the barred windows.

Currently the courthouse is home to both Superior Court, and District Court. Offices in within the courthouse include Treasurer Office, Auditors Office, the Commissioner's Office, Central Services, Sheriff's Office, and Jail.

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## Condition & Integrity

The Adams County Courthouse remains in good condition and continues to house the District, Superior Courtrooms and county offices including Treasure, Auditor, Assessor and Commissioners offices. Additions have been added to the Jail & Sherriff's office in 1984 which also included window replacements for the courthouse. 2008 saw interior renovations of the courthouse. In an effort to preserve the courthouse's historical qualities, recommendations where provided for historical restorations by Jeanne Schwab Designs. New carpeting, replacement of tile, ADA restroom facilities, and new paint was included in this renovation.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/ GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1941

### Significant Dates

1941

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Whitehouse & Price (Architect)

Ludberg, Clyde M. (Builder)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Adams County Courthouse in Ritzville, Washington is historically significant under criterion "A" as a property that is directly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of government growth, development and industry in Adams County. The building is also meets National Register criteria "C" as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type and period of construction, and represents the work of the noted architectural firm of Whitehouse & Price. Completed in 1941, the Stripped Classical/PWA Moderne design of the building reflects the era in which it was built.

The period of significance begins and ends in 1941, the year of the building's completion. Today, the building remains in use as the county courthouse. While the building has been updated to meet the needs of the county several times over the years, it maintains a high degree of architectural integrity in the original courthouse portion of the building.

**Adams County Historical Background**

Carved from Whitman County, Adams County was established in 1883. Initially it was a sparsely settled area with the population of the county reaching only 376 people by 1885. Reportedly the first permanent Euro-American settler in the future county was George Lucas, an Irish emigrant. He had established a way-station at Cow Creek along the road to Fort Colville back in 1869. Lucas also raised cattle and horses, and Cow Creek and nearby Crab Creek provided water for his herds.

Interest in establishing a new county led the Washington Territorial Legislative assembly to appoint James G. Bennett, George Sinclair Sr., and John L. Johnson to hold the first county commissioners meeting in the fall of 1883. With support from the legislative assembly and settlers in the region, the formal articles of incorporation were approved by Governor William A. Newell on November 28, 1883. The new county was named in honor of John Adams, the second president of the United States. It wasn't until about a year later that the decision was made to choose Ritzville as the county seat. From this time forward, Adams County saw growth in the population as incoming farmers began to file claims for land. However, growth was relatively slow and settlement was mainly spurred by the arrival of railroad lines.

In Adams County, the genesis, location, and eventual fate of nearly every town hinged on the railroads. The *Northern Pacific Railroad* began laying track through Adams County in May 1881. The *Spokane, Portland, & Seattle Railroad* laid its track in 1907, and the *Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, & Pacific Railroad* (the Milwaukee Road) did so the same year. The communities of Othello, Hatton, Ralston, and Marcellus, were established along the *Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, & Pacific Railroad*; Twin Well, Providence, Lind, PaHa, Ritzville, and Keystone along the *Northern Pacific Railroad*; Washtucna, Hooper, Bengie, and Lantz along the *Spokane, Portland, & Seattle Railroad*. All sprang into being for the convenience of railroad construction crews and persevered as station stops for wells or water towers to feed the boilers of steam trains. Population and businesses (mercantile, hotel, warehouse, post office, church, school, and perhaps a flour mill) grew up around this nucleus. Unless a town had another artery of support (as in Othello after the Bureau of Land Reclamation located their offices there), the decline of rail shipping and rail travel meant the decline (or death) of the town.

Early farmers found the volcanic soil in Adams County rich in nutrients, but an arid climate where average rainfall was only nine inches per year made growing most crops difficult even in moist years and impossible in dry ones. Wheat, however, can be raised in arid climates and without irrigation.

One of the early wheat farmers in Adams County was James G. Bennett who harvested a small but successful wheat crop near Ritzville in 1880. Soon Russian-German settlers (Volga Germans) who had arrived in Adams County in 1883 and had farmed wheat in Russia, planted it in Adams County. Seeing their success, other settlers also planted wheat.

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By 1897, Adams County had produced its first bumper crop of wheat, marking the beginning of wheat farming's eclipse over cattle ranching in the county. The 1897 crop inspired a major influx of new settlers. In 1901 Ritzville exported more wheat than any other town in world -- two million bushels filling nearly 2,000 boxcars. By 1904, Ritzville was the largest initial shipping point for wheat in the United States.

By 1909, giddy with prosperity, Adams County published a pamphlet to be distributed at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. The pamphlet read, *"Adams County, Washington, the bread basket of the world. A land of wonderful resources where courage, intelligence, strenuous and persistent efforts of the hardy pioneer have wrested the hidden wealth from mother earth ... [a] golden wheat belt which has pushed its way steadily into the wilderness of sage brush which the pioneers found when they came. The gold has gradually absorbed the brown ... the history of Adams County is a song of wheat"*.

During a severe drought in 1928-1931 that resulted in dustbowl conditions, many people left the area. The remaining wheat farmers consolidated the abandoned farms and worked thousands of acres to produce a commercial crop. Before the invention of the gasoline-powered crawler tractor in the late 1920s, teams of mules or horses performed much of the labor. In 2004 Adams County produced 15,451,000 bushels of wheat, the third largest yield in the state after Whitman and Lincoln counties.

After Grand Coulee Dam was completed in 1942, construction on the Columbia Irrigation Project reached the Othello area in 1950, bringing the water of the Columbia River to irrigate Adams County's dry land. The water brought new farmers and new possibilities of growth to the region.

As the only settlement of any size in the new county, Ritzville was chosen as the county seat. It sprang into existence in 1880 when the Northern Pacific Railroad established it as a station stop. It was named after Philip Ritz, an early settler who had landed the contract for grading 10 miles of the railroad bed. William McKay erected the town's first building, an eight-room house that served as a hotel for rail construction workers. While the town was home at first mostly to railroad workers, soon wheat farmers arrived, first from South Dakota and then from Russia by way of Germany. Ritzville soon grew into an important wheat-shipping point and commercial center. It incorporated twice, in 1888 under territorial laws, and then in 1890 under the new state laws. It thrived in the early part of the century, reaching a population of 1,900 in 1920, but was hit hard by drought and an agricultural depression in the 1920s and 1930s. Irrigation projects boosted the town through 1940s and 1950s.

### FIRST COURTHOUSE (1885)

Government operations in the county began in earnest when the first official courthouse moved from into a modest wooden structure which has built originally as a house. The modest four-room, two story structure was purchased from Nelson H. Greene for \$500. Located on the corner of Washington and Broadway it housed the office of the Adams County Superintendent of Schools and other county offices. There is no record of a jail during this period of time.

Spurred by the railroad and good farming conditions, by 1889 the population of the county had grown to 1,842. By 1890 the census showed the county's population had reached 2,098.

### SECOND COURTHOUSE (1892, 1905)

This rapid growth placed a burden on the services required by county government and it wasn't long before the physical needs of the county government outgrew the modest space in their first courthouse. On December 28, 1891, Adams County Commissioners Philip L. Kretzer, James Smith, and Albert S. Elder, approved a \$20,000 bond to build a new courthouse. The vote was two-to-one to approve the bond, with Commissioner Elder opposing the venture.

While the architect for the new brick courthouse is unknown, the construction contract was awarded to Burnham & Clapp of Spokane, Washington on Feb. 23, 1892, for the sum of \$19,945. The grand Italianate style brick courthouse was a radical departure from the original modest wooden structure. The building



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boasted a raised brick basement which housed the jail and sheriff's office and his living quarters. The upper two floors were highlighted by brick walls and stone arched topped windows and housed county offices and courtrooms. Rising a full four stories was a grand bell tower capped with an open cupola. The new courthouse was completed and officially accepted by the commissioners on August 20, 1892.

It was reported that finally all of the county departments were under one roof. Quickly the new building, as the tallest and most prominent building in the county, became a quasi-community center. It was the largest space available in the county and the Adams County News noted numerous community activities being held in the courthouse.

Due to growth in the county, an addition was needed in short order. According to the Jan. 13, 1905, edition of The Ritzville Times, "A number of officials appeared before the board [of county commissioners] and asked that an addition be built to the court house for the accommodation of the auditor and treasurer who require more room on account of the increase in business."

Under pressure from citizens, in May 1905 Adams County Commissioners Joseph M. Batten, Henry J. Allert and Fred Kembel approved the construction of a new addition. They hired the Spokane architectural firm of Preusse & Zittel to draw the plans. The design doubled the square footage of the existing building and was attached to the front of the 1892 building. This pushed the courthouse nearly to the sidewalk on W Broadway Ave. The additional followed a similar formula to the 1892 courthouse; a two-story brick structure with a raised basement, highlighted by a central four-story bell tower. The old bell tower was removed. Architectural details of the new wing were more restrained, with articulation being reserved for the overhanging eaves and the bell tower.

The plan provided enlarged office space for the auditor, treasurer and commissioners, while the superior court judge would have a private office which led directly into the courtroom. Additionally, in the basement more jail cells were provided and new vaults were planned. Work began on the addition in June with Spokane contractors Hastie & Dougan supervising the project. The cost of the addition was \$12,247 and was completed in October 1905.

### THIRD COURTHOUSE (1940-41)

By the late 1930s, the 40+ year old courthouse and its addition were showing signs of its age and the space was inadequate to house all the county services under one roof again. Reportedly at the time, space was being rented in two buildings on Main Street to accommodate the prosecuting attorney, the county agent and a vault room. It was reported that the linoleum in the courthouse had not been updated since 1905; the heating plant was worn out; the vault for the auditor, treasurer and engineer were crowded. Additionally the offices were too small and the county would soon have to find larger offices for the welfare department.

The commission hired the noted Spokane architectural firm of Whitehouse & Price to come up with a plan to address the various concerns. They were first told to focus on a remodel of the existing facility and to design an addition. The commission planned to spend around \$40,000.

After two weeks of study, the firm returned to Ritzville with three potential solutions; costing between \$55-\$65,000. However the firm told the commissioners that in their professional opinion it would be foolish to spend that amount to fix the existing structure and recommended that a new building be built. Convinced, the commissioners sent Whitehouse & Price back to Spokane to "prepare plans for a completely new building which would allow for ample quarters for all offices at a cost between \$90-115,000".

While the commissioners plan to build a completely new courthouse seemed logical, the plan met with opposition from prominent farmers and businessmen in Lind and Othello. The Lind Commercial Club hosted a "protest meeting" to discuss the matter with county commissioners. The main reasons for opposition was 1) some saw a population shift to the west end of the county and wanted the county seat moved to Lind, and 2)

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others had concerns of the overall economic climate. Commissioner G.G. Plager, Walter Johnson, and Henry Danekas presented their side of the issue to the public which was followed by question from the public.

Commissioner Johnson noted that while Governor Martin had broached the subject of the consolidation of some counties in 1938, he later realized that would be a mistake and the issues was dead. Perhaps jokingly Johnson noted that, "We have a horrible example of remodeling in Lincoln County. The commissioners spent \$50,000 over there and the courthouse still looks as bad as ever." Anticipating more settlement with the opening of the Columbia Basin Project, Johnson also stated that the tax base for the county would likely be increasing. Additionally he pointed out that the county had \$310,000 cash on hand with \$106,000 in current expense and \$139,000 due in delinquent taxes. Suggestions were made to build the courthouse on the highway where people can see it. Others wanted the decision to come before the voters of Adams County.

To address the growing concerns, the commissioners held additional meetings in Washtucna and Othello. Despite the opposition, in April of 1940 they voted to proceed with their plans to build the new courthouse. The cost of the project was estimated at \$89,000 with construction to be completed by December 1940. The rear jail wing was to be let under another contract.

On June 4, 1940, the Board of County Commissioners opened bids for general construction, mechanical work and electrical work. The construction bids included two alternatives –1) cut stone instead of terra cotta, and 2) the omission of all lath and plaster. After reviewing fourteen bids, the proposal by the Clyde M. Ludberg Co., of Spokane, was accepted, with the bidder required to give a surety bond in a penal sum equal to the contract price of \$54,670. Ogden Plumbing and Heating Co. of College Place was the lowest and best bid for heating and ventilating work at \$8,300, while the board awarded the plumbing bid to C.E. Womack of Spokane for \$3,365. Electrical work was awarded to Maxwell & Franks of Spokane for \$2,264.

The new structure, planned at 132 feet long and 49 feet wide, was constructed in the back of the existing courthouse to facilitate the continued use of the county offices while the new building was under construction. Razing of the just the back wing of courthouse (a portion of 1892 building) began in 1940. Demolition and excavation for the new courthouse was started at the same time. Reportedly some materials from the back of the old building were used in the vaults of the new courthouse. By July 1940, there were 25 to 30 local men on site and construction proceeded rapidly without any issues. Razing of the old courthouse was completed by the end of May 1941. The courthouse was completed at the projected cost of \$120,000 and dedicated on September 5, 1941.

The formal dedication ceremony was presided over by Judge Matt Driscoll who characterized the new building as one of the "cornerstones of local government." He also warned against the danger of granting new and additional powers to state and federal governments (most likely a reference to the Columbia basin Irrigation Project). Proceeding Driscoll address was Commissioner Walter R. Johnson who provided a brief history of the county and its former courthouses. Mrs. Edith Olson, former state president of the Woman's Relief Corps, presented a plaque of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address to the county, followed by a recitation of the address by her grandson, Edwin Haugen from Spokane. W. Walters Miller was the master of ceremonies at the dedication. Rev. A.K. Walborn, pastor of the Washtucna Community Church gave the invocation and Julius A. Frantz, a local prominent farmer, sang the "Services Song" accompanied by Mrs. Arthur Franz. Ritzville High School band also played several selections during the ceremony. Following the dedication exercises, doors to the new building were opened. Coffee and cake was served.

Before the courthouse was finished in January 1941 the commissioners called for bids to construct the rear jail wing and to finish work in the main portion of the courthouse building. Also designed by Whitehouse & Price, the jail portion of the bid encompassed constructing a two-story building with a garage underneath which was connected via a hallway to the courtroom on the third floor of the courthouse. It also included laying floor coverings, finishing interior woodwork, building wood counters and other minor items were in the courthouse portion of the building. Utilizing the same contractors, the new jail building was started in May 1941 and

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received its first prisoner in August of that same year. The new jail no longer provided for living quarters for the sheriff.

**Architects: Whitehouse & Price**

Harold Whitehouse and Ernest Price were the founders and principle architects of one of Spokane's most prolific architectural firms. The firm remained in operation for over 50 years until Price's retirement in 1964. The project list for Whitehouse & Price is vast and includes almost 2,500 entries for residential and commercial buildings. In addition to designing over 40 churches in the Spokane region, the firm was responsible for nearly 200 school designs and 16 fraternity and sorority houses, which were built on college campuses throughout Washington State, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana. Whitehouse & Price employed many architectural traditions in their designs but "revival styles" dominated their palette.

When Harold C. Whitehouse (1884-1974) arrived in Spokane in 1907, he had little more than a desire to move West. He had worked as a draftsman in Boston, but had no formal architectural training. In 1908, he formed an architectural firm with partner George Keith and married Catherine Cox Weston. He soon established himself in the community and became active in the All Saints Episcopal Church. Bishop Wells quickly approached Whitehouse with the idea of building a cathedral. Whitehouse became so committed to the inspiration for a cathedral that he left Spokane in 1911 and entered the architectural program at Cornell, where he completed the program in two years. In 1913, he returned to Spokane and the next year formed a partnership with Ernest V. Price (1881-1975), another Cornell graduate, with whom he remained partners until Price's retirement in 1964. Price was born in New York and graduated from Cornell in 1904. Before coming to Spokane, he was a draftsman for the firm of Hale & Rogers in New York, and spent time working for the firm of Purdy & Henderson in Havana, Cuba (1906-09).

The firm worked closely with sculptors, masons and woodworkers from throughout the Northwest to produce meticulously detailed work. Whitehouse became a notable as a craftsman in his own right. He was known to not just design interior details, but also build them for his projects including woodworking and metal fabrication. His appreciation and understanding for the arts gave him a unique opportunity to unite the exterior and interior decorative elements in a harmonious, intentional manner. To this degree, Whitehouse worked closely with masons and sculptures.

One such example of this relationship is expressed in their work for courthouse in Boundary County, Idaho. The building was constructed in 1940 and was a part of the Public Works Administration/ Works Progress Administration. This provided the firm the opportunity to work with painter/sculpture Fletch Martin on the bass relief sculptural panels located on the façade of the courthouse. Reportedly Whitehouse designed the panels to represent significant economical infrastructures of the region logging, mining and farming. Whitehouse most likely also provided the specific designs for the bass relief sculptures on the façade of the Adams County Courthouse.

**Stripped Classical Movement**

The Adams County Courthouse was designed in the Stripped Classical or PWA Moderne style. The stripped classical movement can often be characterized by qualities of architecture which removed the majority of ornamentation. The intention was to provide simplified, yet recognizable building which would often relate to classism of the previous era. Ornamentation when used, took influence from the Art Deco movement. Such details would combined tradition decorative sculpture with modern age imagery, often representing the rapid industrialization of the time period. These ornamentations are found throughout the courthouse, most notable are the motif sculptures found at found façade and main entrance which highlight the agricultural background of the county.

The style and shapes used were simple in form, structured by simplified surfaces and enhanced with window elements that often streamlined the overall appearance. Materials often used were that of concrete, stone or brick. New materials were also a significant to the time period. Aluminum and stainless steel were often used

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during this time, the machine was viewed an element of modernity and therefore reflected into the designs of buildings at this time. Simple, machine-made objects were carefully placed to express a context of sophistication, and were often expressed in motifs. The common motif found in the Adams County Courthouse is the wheat shaft. Such stylized design is found in the light fixtures, stair balustrades, transom window above the entry doors (now removed), and the cast stone exterior sculptural elements. It was common practice for the designers to create specially crafted elements to decorate both the interiors and exteriors of the building.

The Adams County Courthouse is an outstanding local example of Stripped Classical design. It incorporates the essential features of a visually dominant central section with subsidiary wings. The stepped back massing, series of straight lines and angular, recessed, geometric shapes along with a sleek smooth surface exemplify this style. While not funded by the federal new deal programs of the late 1930s, the building is a product from that era and shares many characteristics of design from that timeframe.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Adams County Board of County Commissioners minutes, Feb. 23, 1884; June 4, 1940

Harland Eastwood. Personal Interview. Numerous interviews.

Wilhelm, Honor L.

1908 "The Coast" Magazine by Honor L Wilhelm, Volume XV, Number One, Jan 1908

Woodbridge, Sally B

1981 Building Through Time *The Life of Harold C. Whitehouse* 1884-1974  
American Lives Endowment

"Adams County's Early History...A Story of Bunchgrass and Wheat", Adams County Centennial Edition 1983

### Newspaper Articles

*History of the Big Bend Country Embracing Lincoln, Douglas, Adams and Franklin Counties State of Washington*, Western Historical Publishing Company, 1904.

"New County Officials." *The Ritzville Times* 13 Jan 1905: Page 1.

"Enlarge Court House," *The Ritzville Times* 12 May 1905: Page 1.

"Lind Farm, Business Leaders Want Delay On New Courthouse," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 11 Jan 1940: Pages 1, 8.

"Opposition To New Courthouse Fails To Materialize In 'Tucna,'" *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 8 Feb 1940: Pages 1, 8.

"Commissioners Okeh New Courthouse," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 11 Apr 1940: page 1.

"Courthouse Work Starts In Ernest," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 20 June 1940: page 1.

"Forms Rise For Courthouse Walls," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 4 July 1940: page 1.

"Courthouse Will Be Done Dec. 1st," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 5 Sept 1940: page 1.

"Call For Bids On Jail, Wrecking Old Courthouse," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 2 Jan 1941: page 1.

"Razing Of Old Courthouse Spectacular Sight," *The Ritzville Journal-Times*, 29 May 1941: page 1.

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.59

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References** NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

### Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 47.127851° -118.382759°  
Latitude Longitude

3 47.126865° -118.382581°  
Latitude Longitude

2 47.127384° -118.381956°  
Latitude Longitude

4 47.127316° -118.383431°  
Latitude Longitude

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

This nominated property includes all of block 48, located on the second railroad addition (courthouse), in Ritzville, Washington. The parcel number of the site is 1935230524800, and the Adams County map number is: 193523 1935-23-13-340030-048-00000.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated courthouse occupies the entire tax block as previously described. The courthouse is situation at the center of the parcel, with a grand front lawn, and sheriff's office and jail addition behind the courthouse.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Coppock

(EDITED BY DAHP STAFF)

organization The DOH Associates, PS

date October 2018

street & number 7 N. Wenatchee Avenue, Suite 500

telephone (509) 662-4781

city or town Wenatchee

state WA

zip code 98801

e-mail [pcoppock@doharchitects.com](mailto:pcoppock@doharchitects.com)



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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets** 1323
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



### Google Earth Map

Adams County Courthouse

1 47.127851° -118.382759°  
Latitude Longitude

3 47.126865° -118.382581°  
Latitude Longitude

2 47.127384° -118.381956°  
Latitude Longitude

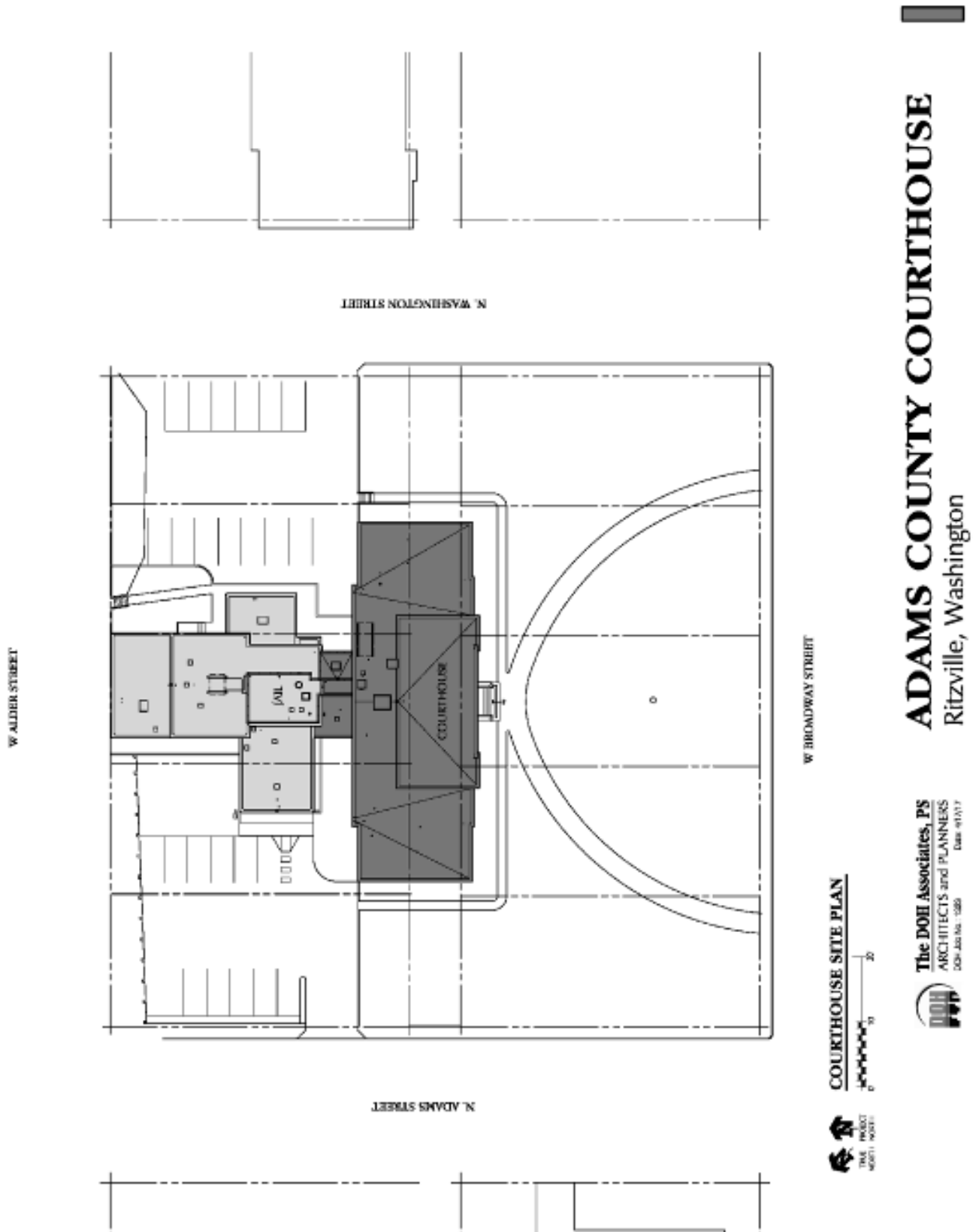
4 47.127316° -118.383431°  
Latitude Longitude

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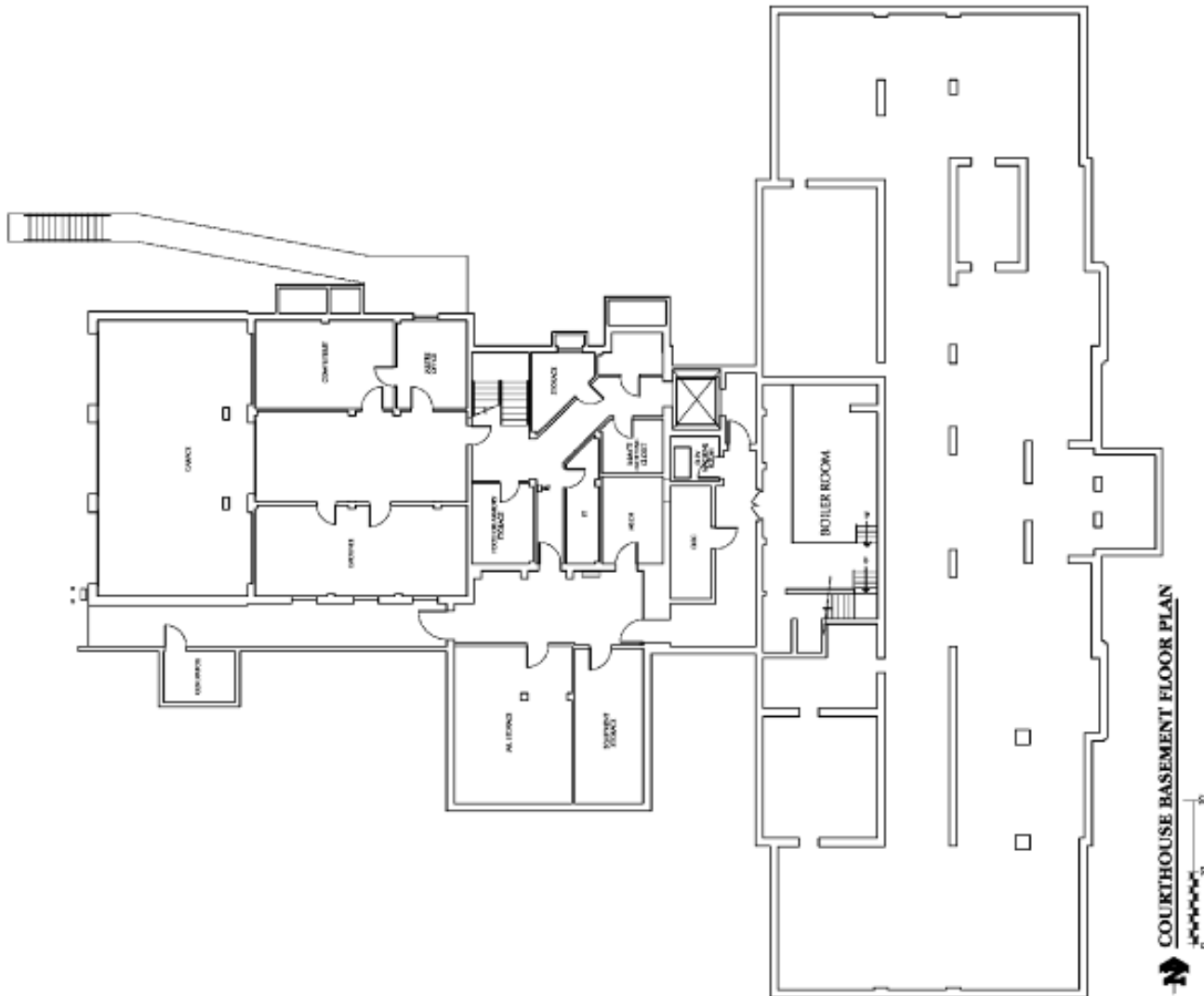


ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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COURTHOUSE BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

**ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
Ritzville, Washington

**The DOH Associates, PS**  
ARCHITECTS and PLANNERS  
DOH-Jas No: 1585 Date: 01/17/17

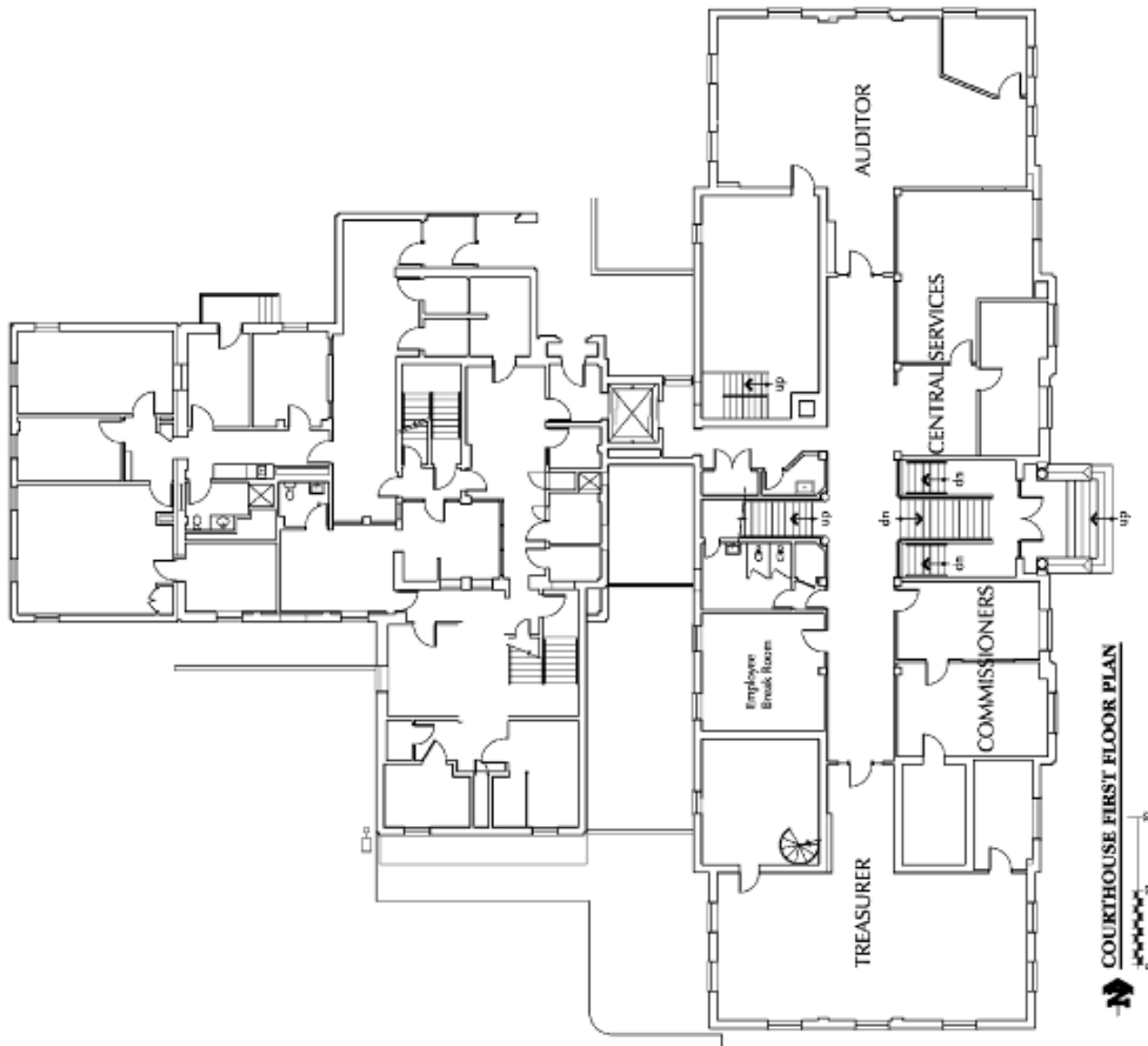


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COURTHOUSE FIRST FLOOR PLAN

**ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
Ritzville, Washington

**The DOH Associates, PS**  
ARCHITECTS and PLANNERS  
DOH-Ad-16-100 Date: 4/13/17

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**COURTHOUSE SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

**The DOH Associates, PS**  
ARCHITECTS and PLANNERS  
DOH-Adm No. 1060 Date 9/11/17

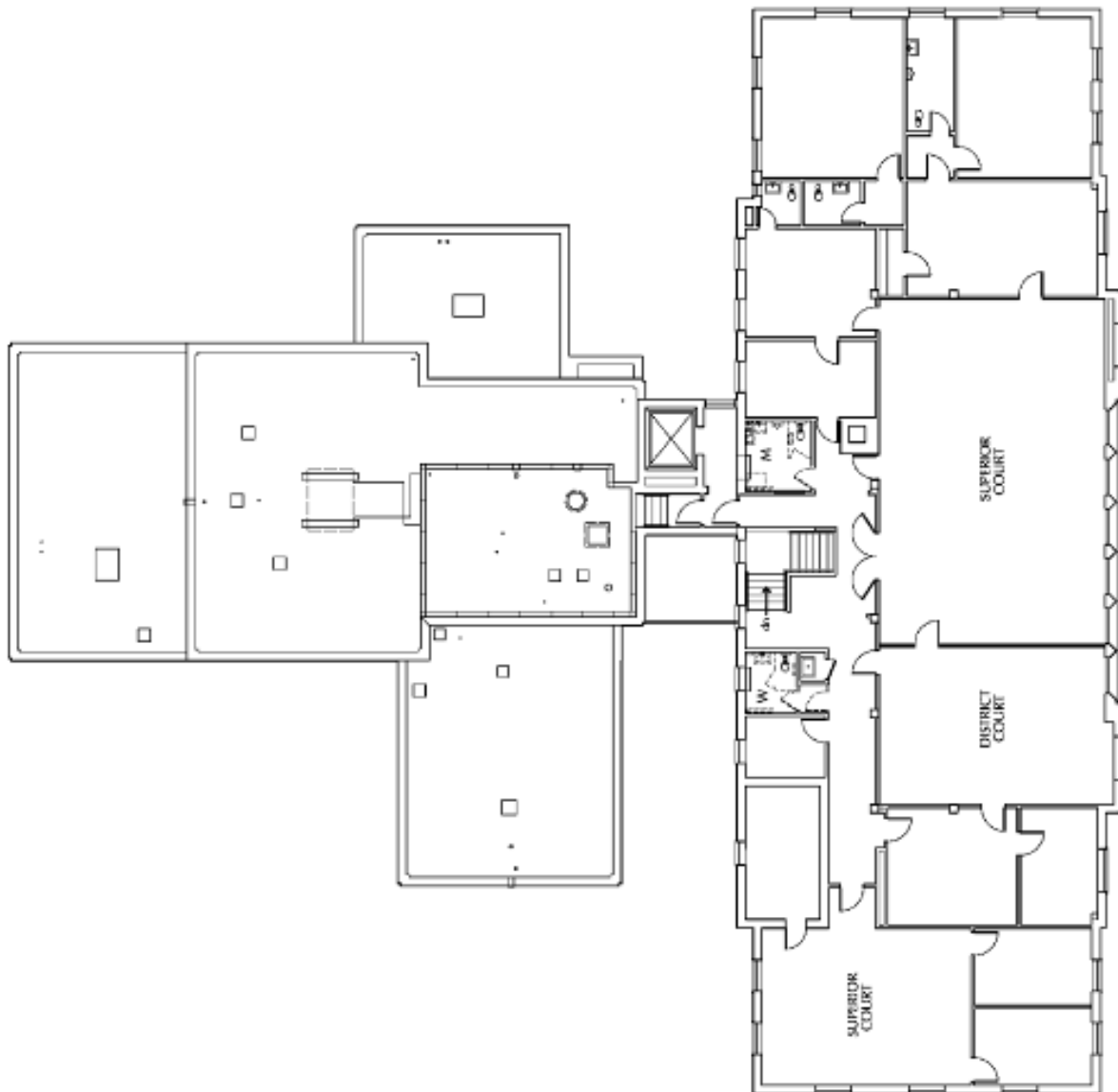
**ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
Ritzville, Washington

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**ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
Ritzville, Washington

**The DOH Associates, PS**  
ARCHITECTS and PLANNERS  
DOH-AS-NO. 1585 Date: 01/17



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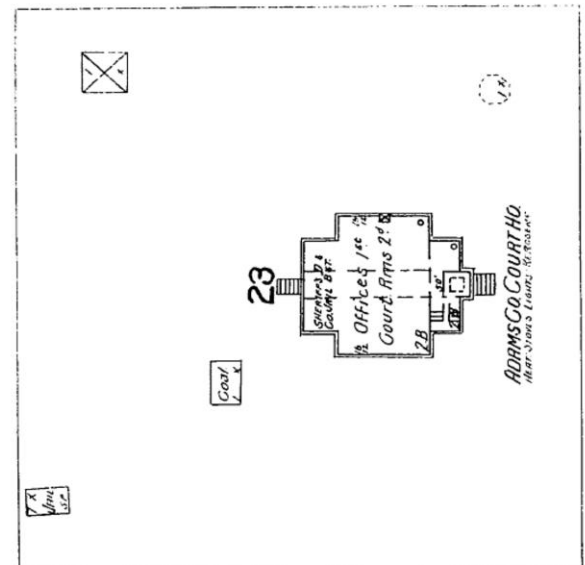
County and State



First Adams County Courthouse, c. 1885



Second Adams County Courthouse , Built: 1892



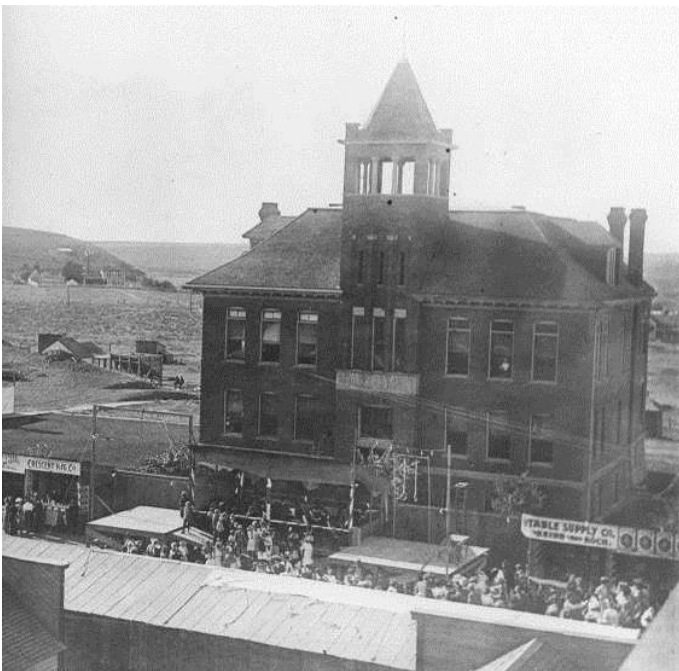
Sanborn Map – 1902, Sheet 2

ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

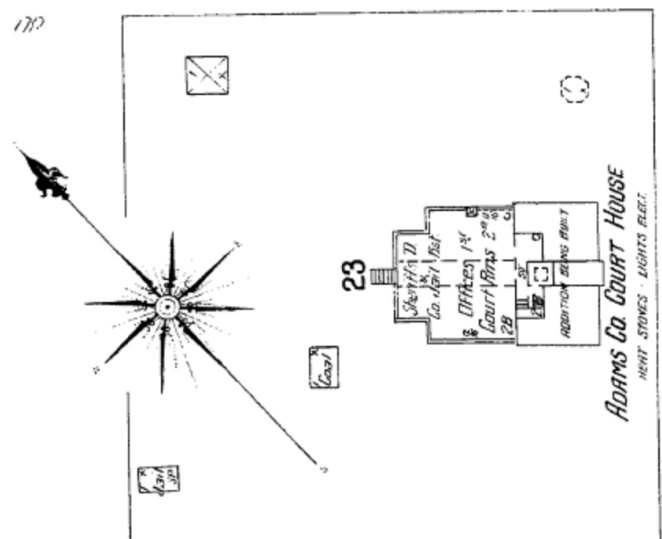
Name of Property

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Images of Adams County Courthouse addition,  
Built 1905, Presusse & Zittel architect.



Sanborn Map - 1905, Sheet 2  
Showing addition under construction



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Construction of rear jail wing.

Adams County Courthouse Demolition & New construction, May 1941

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Adams County Courthouse, 1941, A.M. Kendrick



Adams County Courthouse, 1941, A.M. Kendrick



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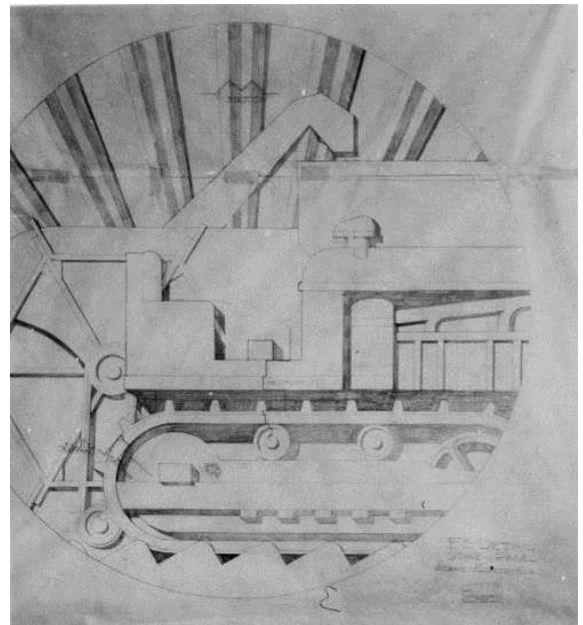
County and State



Adams County Courthouse Entrance Relief Sculpture, 1941, A.M. Kendrick



Adams County Courthouse Entrance Relief Sculpture,  
Note original entry doors and transom windows.  
1941, A.M. Kendrick



Drawing of medallion at Adams County  
Courthouse - Farming Motif

ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

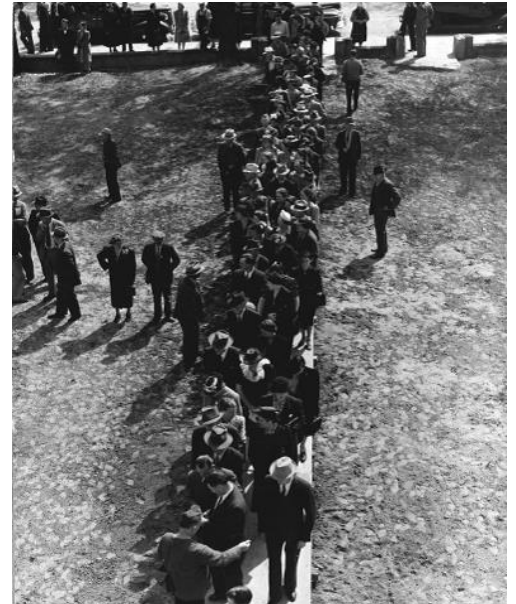
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Dedication Day, Judge Matt Driscoll dedication Speech, 1941



Crowds lining up for opening of new courthouse



Dedication Day, County Commissioners, Walter Johnson, Henry Danakee & Ed Wahl, 1941

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Move in Day to new courthouse building, 1941.

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**Farewell Breakfast for old County courthouse before demolition, May 16, 1941**

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Adams County Courthouse

**City or Vicinity:** Ritzville

**County:** Adams County

**State:** WA

**Photographer:** J. Saunders

**Date Photographed:** 2017

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**



Photograph 1: Adams County Courthouse Image 1, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 2: Adams County Courthouse Image 2, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 3: Adams County Courthouse Image 3, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 4: Adams County Courthouse Image 4, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 5: Adams County Courthouse Image 5, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 6: Adams County Sheriff's Office Image 1, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 7: Adams County Sheriff's Office Image 2, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 8: Adams County Sheriff's Office Image 3, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 9: Adams County Sheriff's Office Image 4, J. Saunders, 2017

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**Photograph 10: Adams County Courthouse  
Farming Motif, J. Saunders, 2017**

**Photograph 11: Adams County Courthouse  
Wheat Motif, J. Saunders, 2017**



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Photograph 12: Adams County Courthouse Entrance, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 13: Adams County Courthouse Entrance Relief Sculpture, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 14: Adams County Courthouse Entrance Column Image 1, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 15: Adams County Courthouse Entrance Column Image 2, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 16: Adams County Courthouse Entrance Light, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 17: Adams County Courthouse Entrance Rail, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 18: Adams County Courthouse Archway Outside, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 19: Adams County Courthouse Archway Inside, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 20: Adams County Courthouse Jail Plaque, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 1: Adams County Superior Courtroom Image 1, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 222: Adams County Superior Courtroom Image 2, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 23: Adams County Superior Courtroom Image 3, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 24: Adams County Superior Courtroom Image 4, J. Saunders, 2017

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Figure 25: Adams County Superior Courtroom Image 5, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 26: Adams County Superior Courtroom Ceiling Detail, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 27: Adams County Superior Courtroom Doors, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 28: Adams County Treasurer's Office, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 29: Adams County Auditor's Office, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 30: Adams County Auditor's Office File Cabinets, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 31: Adams County Auditor's Office Swing Door, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 32: Adams County Auditor's Office Vault Door, J. Saunders, 2017



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Photograph 33: Adams County Auditor's Office Vault Contents, J. Saunders, 2017



Photograph 34: Adams County Commissioner's Plaque, J. Saunders, 2017

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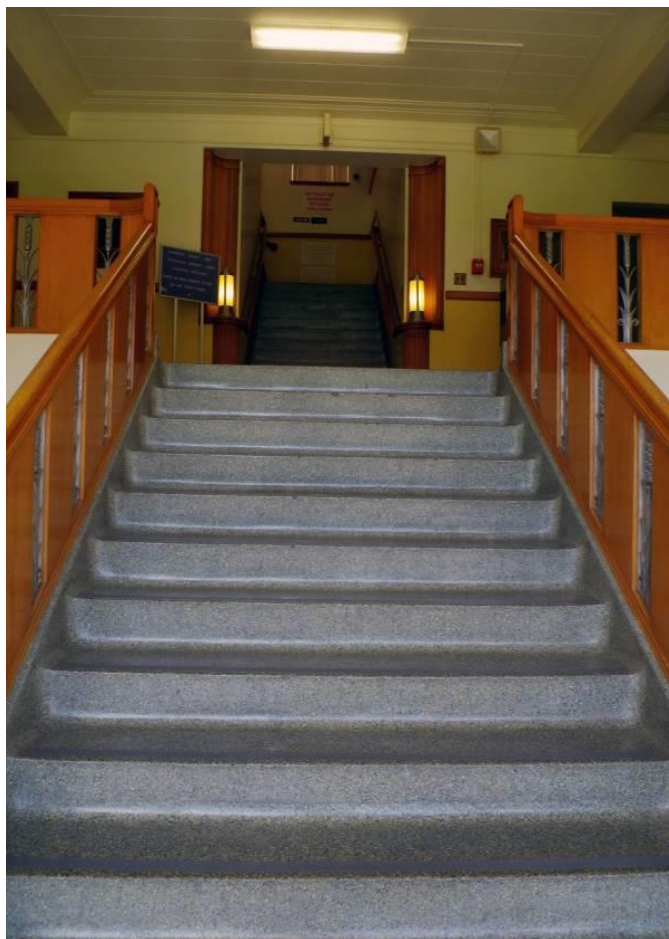
**Photograph 35: Adams County Commissioner's Vault, J. Saunders, 2017**

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**Photograph 36: Adams County Courthouse Staircase, J. Saunders, 2017**

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Photograph 37: Adams County Courthouse Stars Column Light, J. Saunders, 2017

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**Photograph 38: Adams County Courthouse Wheat Rail Image 1, J. Saunders, 2017**



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**Photograph 39: Adams County Courthouse Wheat Rail Image 2, J. Saunders, 2017**



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Photograph 40: Adams County Courthouse Lobby Chandelier, J. Saunders, 2017



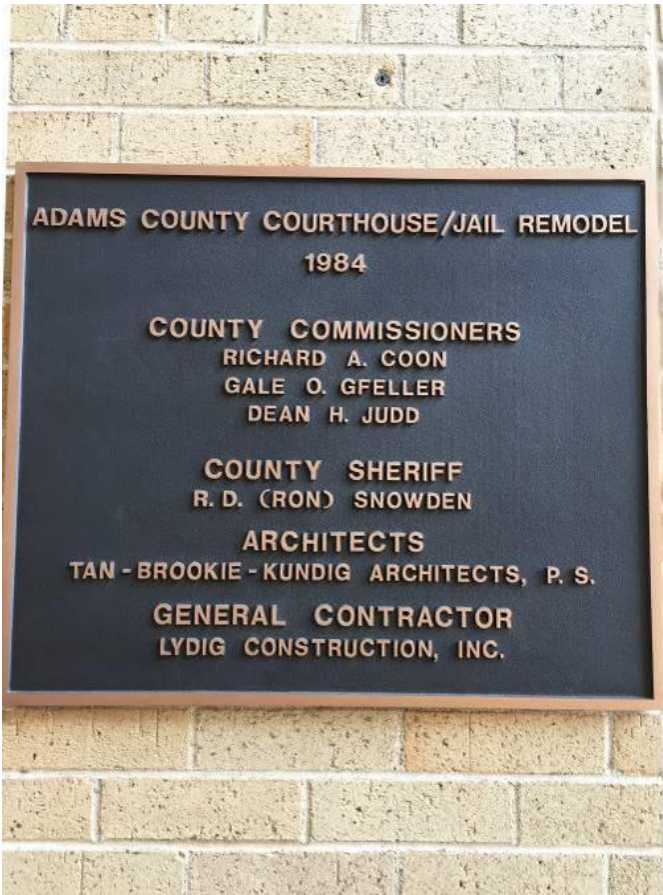
Photograph 41: Adams County Courthouse Third Floor Woodwork, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 42: Adams County Courthouse 1984 Addition Plaque, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 43: Adams County Courthouse 1905 Addition Plaque, J. Saunders, 2017

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Photograph 44: Adams County Courthouse 1892 Construction Plaque, J. Saunders, 2017

**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Adams County

street & number 210 W. Broadway

telephone 509-659-3276

city or town Ritzville

state WA

zip code 99169

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.